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STATE FOR EAP/CM, CA/OCS/ACS/EAP, AIAG, OES/IHA, MED
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE AND GH
CDC FOR OGHA AND DIV-FLU
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP
HHS PASS TO FIC/NIH
USDA PASS TO APHIS, FAS (OSTA AND OCRA), FSIS
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC, USAID
BEIJING FOR HHS HEALTH ATTACHE AND RMO
PHNOM PENH FOR CDC INFLUENZA COORDINATOR
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SUBJECT: Guangdong's AI Strategy: Raising Awareness and
Strengthening Communication

REF: A. Guangzhou 1048; B. Hong Kong 2443; C. Guangzhou 1070; D.

Guangzhou 1075; E. Guangzhou 1279; F. Beijing 7401; Beijing 7567

¶1. (U) Summary: At the end of 2007, Guangdong provincial authorities announced a new AI prevention plan to increase public awareness, test response strategies, and ensure regional communication and cooperation. Also of some interest is the province's new emergency awareness website (www.gdemo.gov.cn), which will quickly disseminate information regarding public emergencies, and is designed to help curb the spread of misinformation. End summary.

'Beefing Up' the Prevention Strategy

¶2. (U) In the wake of two reported cases of avian influenza in Jiangsu province (ref. F), and the possibility of AI outbreaks this winter and spring, Guangdong authorities are focusing heavily on 'readiness' levels as part of their AI prevention plan. Guangdong authorities held an informal press conference in late 2007 to update local Consulates on the AI situation. The official statement outlined a five-fold prevention strategy:
-- all principal leaders in the provincial, municipal, and district governments will play a role in their respective AI emergency response teams; they will be assessed by their direct supervisors on their participation and job performance;
-- a stockpile of at least 50 million doses of AI vaccines and 300 tons of disinfectant will be maintained for routine and emergency use;
-- Guangdong province will enforce a compulsory vaccination program; AI vaccines will only be purchased from Ministry of Agriculture-approved manufacturers and used according to government vaccination guidelines;

-- AI surveillance will be increased; and -- there will be an increased focus on emergency awareness via lectures, training, and media publicity.

Strengthening Emergency Notification

¶3. (SBU) On December 18, the Guangdong provincial government launched an emergency awareness website (www.gdemo.gov.cn). The website, managed by the provincial government's Emergency Management Office, will quickly disseminate information regarding public emergencies, and is designed to help curb the spread of misinformation. The site covers public health crises such as AI, as well as other emergencies including natural disaster, major accidents, and crime. The website uses a disaster alert coloring system rating incidents from blue (normal) to red (very high). In addition, HE Jianfeng, of Guangdong's Center for Disease Control (CDC), told us that 112,000 printed brochures were distributed promoting AI education.

Heightened Communication and Collaboration

¶4. (SBU) According to LIN Jinyan, Deputy Director General of the Guangdong CDC, his organization publishes and distributes a bi-weekly internal newsletter regarding infectious disease outbreaks to all levels of the Guangdong Department of Health and to other provincial CDCs, as well as to health authorities in Hong Kong and Macao.

¶5. (U) Guangdong CDC has strengthened its disease surveillance and prevention program by forming a collaborative relationship with the World Health Organization (WHO) for surveillance, research, and

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training of emerging infectious diseases including influenza. This first ever WHO collaboration center in China aims to develop and implement training programs for Guangdong and provinces in the south.

Practice Makes Perfect

¶6. (SBU) On December 11, Guangdong Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region held a joint AI emergency drill, following reports of two human AI cases in Jiangsu Province (ref. F). Performed under the auspices of the provincial Department's of Health, the exercise specifically targeted response readiness and cross-provincial cooperation and communication. The exercise scenario, in which two family members in Guangdong Province were "infected" with avian influenza, and were in close contact with family members in Guangxi, nearly mirrored the Jiangsu incident reported earlier in the month. According to WU Yueqi, Director of Guangdong's Department of Health Emergency Response Office, post-exercise evaluations showed good cooperation between the two jurisdictions, an important factor in the AI prevention program.

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